

164. 13. R. i. 4.
SOME
MEMOIRS
OF THE
LIFE

OF
Dr. NATHAN ALCOCK,

LATELY DECEASED.

LONDON:

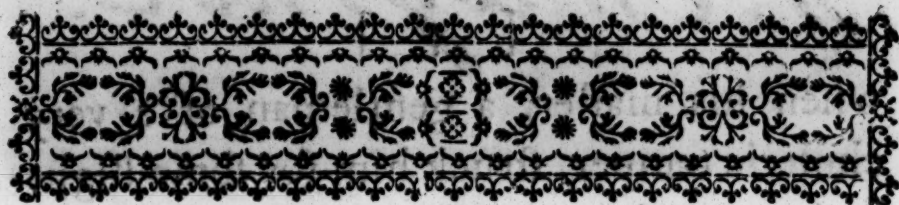
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MDCCLXXX.

103.

W. Musgrave.





S O M E
M E M O I R S, &c.

NATHAN ALCOCK, born in September, 1707, was the second son of Mr. David Alcock, of Runcorn, in Cheshire, by his virtuous and sensible wife, Mary Breck. His parents taught him to read and write, and the first rudiments of the Latin tongue: for the mother, as well as father, partly understood it. He was then put to a neighbouring grammar-school, under the care of a very ingenious master, N. Cowper, a first cousin to his father, and formerly of Brasenose College, Oxford. Here our young scholar went on very well for a considerable time, shewed signs of a promising genius, and seldom gave any cause for blame, or had any cause for dislike, until one day,

when his master, a gentleman of a very choleric temper, struck him for some slight fault or other. This Nathan took so much in dudgeon, that he could never afterwards be prevailed upon to go to that school again, but loitered away his time at home in country business, and rural amusements; particularly in that silent, solitary diversion, angling, of which he was very fond.

In the mean time, Thomas, the third son, was placed out at Warrington School, under the tuition of an excellent master, the Reverend Mr. Heywood; and from thence, in proper time, sent to Brasenose college in Oxford. This petty progress of Thomas in the literary world, together with a sight of a few of his books in vacation time presented to Nathan, and some jocular reproaches now and then flung out to him at his burying himself in the country, at last so raised the jealousy and emulation of the *disgusted youth*, that he now applied to his father, and said, he would go to school again, and was determined to prosecute the study of physic, to
which

which his brother had advised him, if his father would give up to him a small estate, scarce producing 50*l.* a year, which lay at a distance, in Wyrrol, the name of a hundred and peninsula in Cheshire. The father was very ready to give him up that estate, having always designed it for him. But said, he thought the income would not support him in such an expensive undertaking, either at our own or any foreign university—that he had several other sons then upon his hands to provide for, and should not be able to advance any thing more to him afterwards, however great his need. The son replied, he doubted not, he should be able to make a shift to subsist on that income, that he would make up the deficiency by œconomy, and deny himself, what he had not the means to procure*.

Immediately he put himself under the instruction of a brother-in-law, Mr. Cowley, who was master of a public grammar school in Lancashire. And here his ad-

* The Stoic's maxim, as mentioned by Seneca, was, *What you want, borrow of yourself.*

vancement was so rapid in classical learning, that in a twelvemonth, or little more, he was become master of Greek and Latin. He had also read many good English authors, particularly the Spectators, in which he took great delight. Arithmetic and Geometry he likewise applied to; and went through, by himself, Ward's Mathematics, and said he very well understood them. The study of physic, however, was always uppermost in his view; and he now thought himself sufficiently furnished with a stock of preliminary learning to commence that study in a serious and regular manner.

Accordingly he set out for Edinburgh; this being the nearest, and reckoned the cheapest university, as well as a very good one for the cultivation of the several branches of physic. Here he very diligently attended all the courses of lectures, and made considerable improvement in botany, chemistry, and anatomy. But this university, which was then rather growing into fame, than become famous, did not satisfy our ambitious and knowledgeable-

ledge-thirsty pupil. Boerhaave's name at this time was founded all over Europe; and the aspiring Alcock could not rest until he had feasted his eyes and senses with a sight and hearing of that great man.

He therefore left Edinburgh, took shipping at Hull, and crossed over to Holland. The professors at Leyden gave him great satisfaction. Boerhaave on the praxis, Gobius in chemistry, Albinus in anatomy, and Gravesand in experimental philosophy and astronomy, answered his highest expectations. Here, I have heard him say, he applied with redoubled diligence. He enjoyed a great share of health and spirits; and declared he could study longer than any man at Leyden by mere strength of constitution. In the latter part of his stay here, an English gentleman, that was absent, gave him the use of a small house in the country, where, in vacation time, he had an opportunity of making private dissections and preparations in anatomy, and experiments in natural philosophy and chemistry.

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And now, after several years residence here, and the closest application, he supposed himself very well fraught with a stock of medical knowledge, in all its branches; and having, in the spring of 1737, proceeded regularly to a Doctor's degree, he began to turn his thoughts to England, and to a proper place for opening and exercising his medical abilities. However, the sickness and intreaty of an English gentleman, his friend, who begged he would not leave him, detained him some time longer in Holland; and he did not embark for his native country until next year, in autumn 1738.

Oxford was, at this time, reported to him to have little or nothing done in it for the benefit of students in physic. It was said, that old Professor Woodward made a sinecure of his place—that Doctor Nicholls had left the anatomy, and was settled in London—that the readers in this, and in chemistry, either were not qualified, or not disposed to prosecute those sciences with any effect, and that a fair opening now appeared there for an ingenious industrious

trious man to introduce himself. Doctor Alcock, *nihil non ingenuum, nihil non magnificum spirans*, used to say, he could not bear to think of setting up in his profession in some remote provincial town, under vassalage, to pick up the gleanings of some haughty old practitioner. Conscious of his own powers, he knew, he wanted only to be proved, to be esteemed,—that the more public and learned his judges were, the more would the trial redound to his credit. He therefore very gladly embraced the advantage of this fair opening at Oxford, and very soon presented himself to this celebrated university, as a Prælector in Chemistry and Anatomy.

And here, without fortune, without friends, and without recommendations, save the unimportant ones of his brother, and Mr. Parker his tutor; he gradually made his way, and by dint of superior merit bore himself up against all opposition.

For opposition, and that very violent, he soon began to meet with. The whole faculty here were alarmed: and Dr. Frewin

at the head of them went round to their several friends, and made all the interest they could to crush this *Cockatrice* in the egg, and to hinder a Leyden Doctor from gaining a footing in Oxford. It was agreed, that Doctor Hughes of Trinity, should be desired to *read* in Chemistry, and Doctor Laurence be sent for from London, to do the same in Anatomy. They both *read* in the spring of 1740 publicly in the Museum; while Doctor Alcock could only be permitted to give his Lectures privately in a room furnished him by the kind indulgence of the Principal and Fellows of Jesus College. They *read*; I was one of their hearers; but they *read* only a kind Wall-Lectures, read almost to naked walls, for few attended. Doctor Alcock's courses, at the same time, were crowded with pupils, and his fame and interest more and more increased from this contrast of his antagonists, and from this envious self-interested opposition. At last, all enemies disappeared. Doctor Hughes confessed, he was not acquainted enough with Chemistry to be able to give Public Lec-

tures; Doctor Laurence expressed a dislike at being sent for from London upon such an ungenerous occasion; and Doctor Alcock remained master of the field, and became peaceably and triumphantly, in both capacities, public prælector in the Museum.

By this time, a degree had been much talked of for him by many of his friends, in order to incorporate him into the university, and make so useful a man their own. The Doctor himself seemed less earnest, than his friends were, to obtain this honour. He had thoughts of settling in London, and imagined, his character was now sufficiently known and established to enable him to appear there with advantage. He foresaw great opposition to such a degree, as he wanted. He did not know, it would be of any essential service to him, as a practitioner in the metropolis; at most, not of that service, as to countervail the vexation, the trouble, the time and expence it would cost him to obtain a Doctor's degree in Oxford.

However, in the spring of 1741 a Master's degree was *moved for*, and rejected by the *Heads of Houses*. But finding the Masters in convocation were strenuous for it, they endeavoured to compromise the matter, and offered Doctor Alcock the degree of Bachelor of Arts as an adequate honour for his *Leyden-Doctorate*. This was immediately refused: and the Doctor himself thought, if he could not be admitted *ad eundem*, that at least he was entitled to a Master's degree. The members of convocation were almost unanimously of the same opinion, and cried out, he justly deserved this degree, as well in reward of his great merit, and particular usefulness in branches of science so much neglected there, as a compensation for the honour of being a regular Doctor of Physic in the university of *Leyden*; where he studied several years, and did not obtain his *diploma*, as many on this side the water too often do, in some foreign universities, merely for a sum of money in the way of fees, on a very slight examination, without any residence, or gaining any

any improvement on the spot. But although the house of convocation was very ready to grant him the degree solicited, the proposal met with great opposition among the members of the upper house, the heads of colleges. Doctor Fréwin, who, as an able Physician, had much influence on many of this senior order, joined by some others of the faculty, went round to the several colleges, and prevailed on a majority of that order to reject the degree proposed. The faculty now seemed to think, *their craft was in danger*, and that, though they could not entirely keep out this *foreign intruder*, they should at least gain some advantage, by retrograding him to a bachelor, and thereby protracting the time of his admission to practice.

This application for a Master's degree, and the consequent rejection of it, I shall relate in the Doctor's own words, as I had them in a letter from him just at the time.

' Dear Sir, I have purposely deferred
' writing till now, that I might satisfy
' your

‘ your curiosity concerning *my affair*. I
 ‘ am very sorry however, that I can give
 ‘ you no better news concerning it, than
 ‘ that it failed. But the fall was honour-
 ‘ able. Upon its being mentioned in the
 ‘ university, the whole faculty took the
 ‘ alarm. Frewin hurried in from Bath all
 ‘ on a sudden: and he, together with your
 ‘ old Head, Doctor Shippen of Brafe-
 ‘ Nose, from whom I might have ex-
 ‘ pected better usage, jointly canvassed all
 ‘ the Heads of colleges and halls in the
 ‘ university: and all the others of the
 ‘ faculty did the same thing. You know
 ‘ what a great sway *those two* bear in the
 ‘ university. Yet after all, my opponents
 ‘ found themselves so distressed, that they
 ‘ were obliged to have recourse to some
 ‘ very unjustifiable, and poor-spirited
 ‘ means. Some of them reported, that
 ‘ I had declared, I never would ask, or
 ‘ stand for, any degree or preferment in
 ‘ the university—that from my long resi-
 ‘ dence in Holland, I was inclined to be a
 ‘ Dissenter, and not heartily attached to the
 ‘ church of England—that I had de-
 ‘ preciated

‘preciated * our own universities, and that
 ‘I was at the bottom of the dispute between

* *Depreciated our own universities.* Doctor Alcock’s sentiments of our own universities, compared with foreign ones, may be learned from the following abstract of a letter, written at the time of the dispute between the Licentiates and the college of Physicians.
 “There is a most absurd and pernicious custom now prevailing in England among the nobility, and others of fortune, that of sending their sons abroad for education, without ever entering our own famous universities at home. All foreigners of distinction, esteem it a peculiar honour and happiness to have had an opportunity of spending some time at Oxford and Cambridge. My Lord Harcourt’s eldest son, Lord Bath’s, Mr. Needham’s, &c. have been lately sent abroad, without visiting Oxford or Cambridge; and the Marquis of Blandford is just entering on the same course of education. This is really a very great error both in a political or national sense, and with regard to the individuals themselves. The advantages of learning in every branch, particularly the *Belles Lettres*, and a taste for fine writing, are so far superior here to any thing that can be met with abroad, that it would provoke ones indignation and contempt to hear of any comparison. There are now in Oxford, regular courses of Lectures in the Law, and have been for some time, by Doctor Blackstone, a very ingenious man, quite equal to the task, as well as in Philo-

' tween Dr. Hughes and Mr. Knight, of
 ' Magdalen, in the Chemeſtry, &c. &c.
 ' all which were notoriously falſe. Hav-
 ' ing gained a majority with the Doctors,
 ' they uſed all their endeavours alſo to get
 ' over the Maſters of the Arts. But theſe
 ' were firmly my friends; and had the
 ' matter

Philoſophy, Phyſic, &c. Morality too is far better
 ſecured here, than it can poſſibly be, according to the
 preſent modes, any where abroad, by the ſtudents
 being obliged to wear a diſtinguiſhing academic habit
 —by their lodging in colleges—attending prayers and
 exerciſes at ſtated hours, and by being required to be
 in college by nine at night, under the inſpection of
 their tutors and principals. Whereas abroad the ſtu-
 dents are left quite at large in all theſe reſpects, and
 abandoned libertinism is the natural conſequence. The
 advantages of an univerſity acquaintance, to all thoſe
 eſpecially, who are deſigned for profeſſions, are alſo
 very great. The numerous friends they here formed,
 —the independency of each member, and the conſe-
 quent freedom of converſation, emulation, &c. not only
 render Oxford and Cambridge the beſt ſchool in the
 world, not only for the improvement in learning, but for
 extirpating thoſe rank weeds of vanity, pride, ſelf-con-
 ceit, and pedantry, which are ſo ready to ſpring up in
 the human mind, when cultivated only in a private
 manner; when every gentleman being ſuperior to thoſe
 about him, is too apt, both to flatter himſelf, and be
 flattered by others.”

‘ matter come before them in convoca-
 ‘ tion, would have voted for me to a
 ‘ man.

‘ Last of all, so dreadfully apprehensive
 ‘ were they of me, they went, the whole
 ‘ faculty, all in a body, to solicit the Vice
 ‘ Chancellor, Dr. Holmes, President of
 ‘ St. John’s, not to bring the affair *on*
 ‘ *again*. But I believe their solicitations
 ‘ had no great effect, as he has hitherto
 ‘ shewn himself my particular friend. But
 ‘ for the influence of the two Doctors
 ‘ above mentioned, there would not have
 ‘ been a Head of a College against me. I
 ‘ lost it, after all, only by one vote, and
 ‘ that was the Junior Proctor, Mr. L——,
 ‘ who had promised to be for me, though
 ‘ now he turned against me. It is sup-
 ‘ posed, he was influenced by an expecta-
 ‘ tion of 500*l.* arising this year from some
 ‘ fund of the university, which is to be
 ‘ given to the Proctors, or to one of them,
 ‘ and in the disposal of which, Dr. Ship-
 ‘ pen hath the chief hand. The whole
 ‘ university fall foul on him—call him
 ‘ f—— publicly in the coffee-houses,

C

‘ and

‘ and threaten to turn him out of office.
 ‘ The Masters of Arts resent the miscar-
 ‘ riage of my affair so much, that I be-
 ‘ lieve, they will not agree to any thing in
 ‘ convocation, till my favour is granted.
 ‘ Many principal members of the univer-
 ‘ sity, Dr. King for one, sent to me, and
 ‘ said, they would prefer a petition to the
 ‘ Chancellor, and bring me in that way;
 ‘ but I think it better to wait a while,
 ‘ and publish a work, that I have nearly
 ‘ finished, which perhaps may further re-
 ‘ commend me. The Physicians here have
 ‘ certainly done me great honour, by
 ‘ making me appear so formidable. I have
 ‘ got a surprizing interest for so short a
 ‘ time, considering that I did not know a
 ‘ single person at my first coming here.’
 Oxford, N. A.

Many of the Heads of Houses, and the
 general Body of Convocation, saw through
 the futility and malevolence of this oppo-
 sition, and resolved, they would insist on a
 Master’s Degree. Accordingly the next
 Convocation, when some Degrees were to
 be granted, and other business transacted,

the Members flocked early to the House in great numbers, and put a negative on every thing that was proposed, and declared, they would persist to stop all proceedings, until Dr. Alcock's Degree was passed.

Among other Degrees at this time rejected, was that of the famous Mr. Warburton, afterwards Bishop of Gloucester. An Honorary Degree of Doctor in Divinity was proposed for him in Convocation, in consideration of his great abilities, as a learned divine, and celebrated writer. But the question was no sooner mentioned, *Placetne vobis, Magistri?* but a general *Non Placet* ran through the House. Mr. Warburton looked on himself, not merely as not honoured by the Degree solicited, but as greatly affronted, and publicly disgraced by this general rejection of it: And he ever after bore ill-will to the university; though very unjustly; as not considering the then dissentient state of the Members, and that it was not particularly his Degree, but all Degrees which were at that time refused.

The Heads of Houses, finding the Convocation so unanimous and resolute in their opposition, and that, like a *House of Commons* insisting on a tacked clause to a Money-Bill, before they will grant the Supplies, the Members of this Lower House would grant no Degrees, without first obtaining their favourite one for Dr. Alcock, found themselves forced at last to comply : And Mr. Webber, then Senior Proctor of the University, afterwards Rector of Exeter College, who very laudably interested himself much in this affair, was sent with a message from the Vice-Chancellor and Doctors, that they consented to Dr. Alcock's Degree, and desired, that all oppositions and animosities might cease, and the business of the University go on in its usual channel. The Proctor afforded much mirth to the gentlemen of convocation on reading over the Dutch names latinized, affixed to Dr. Alcock's *Leyden Diploma*.

The learned Mr. Markham, Student of Christ Church, now Lord Archbishop of York ; the learned Mr. Lowth, Fellow of New College, now Lord Bishop of London ;

don; the learned Civilian and Barrister, Doctor Blackstone, late one of the Honourable Justices of the Court of Common Pleas; Mr. afterwards Doctor Tottie, of Worcester College; Dr. Parker, now Rector of St. James's; Dr. Forster of Corpus; Dr. Patten of the same College, now the worthy Rector of Childrey, Berks; Dr. Durell of Hartford College; and Mr. Gowin Knight, of Magdalen, afterwards called Dr. Magnetic Knight; I have heard, were some of the principal friends and sticklers for Dr. Alcock on this memorable occasion.

The last-mentioned gentleman, Dr. Alcock used to say, ought to have two or three pair of shoes given him; for so many, he believed, Mr. Knight had worn out in traversing the University on his business. No shoes were given him; but the Doctor, about this time, in my hearing, gave him hints for the investigation of the mode of making artificial magnets, and encouraged him in the prosecution of that philosophic manufacture; which he afterwards brought to so much perfection,
for

for the honour of the nation, and the benefit of navigation.

The contest and victory, as above mentioned, did great honour to Dr. Alcock, as well as shewed the liberal spirit of the members of convocation, who were not to be biaſſed to vote contrary to their own minds, although most of them were in a ſtate of ſubordination to their principals, and ſome of them lay immediately under the rod of power. And indeed the members of convocation here have generally been eſteemed as uncorrupt a body of men, as any in the kingdom; and have at moſt times, if not at all times, approved themſelves friends to juſtice, to merit, to learning, and liberty.

Our Doctor, now regularly incorporated into the Univerſity as a Maſter of Arts, proceeded, as ſoon as the time and terms would permit, to his Bachelor's Degree in Phyſic; which he took without any oppoſition in May 1744. By this ſtep he came to have a right to demand a *Licentia Præſticandi*; which qualified him to praſtiſe both in the univerſity, and elſewhere throughout the kingdom.

And

And now he became more than ever engaged in business, having a considerable *practice* added to the courses of lectures, which he continued to give in chemistry and anatomy, and sometimes on the praxis, with still greater applause; many of the most learned of the university, and some Doctors in physic, law, and theology, not disdaining to give their attendance, and appear as disciples to this *profound* * Master. His company was constantly sought after, and frequented by great numbers of young gentlemen students, who consulted him as an oracle on any difficult points in natural philosophy, chemistry, anatomy, or physic, and who seldom came to him without departing wiser. Study and improvement even mixed themselves with his recreations. His ambulations in the gardens and groves of Oxford seemed to revive the Platonic grove and academy of Athens: And his long favourite evening walks † in

* Dr. Patten used to call him a *Helluo* of learning.

† Dr. Alcock might justly say with Dean Swift;

‘He was the best walker in the place, and five miles round.’—*Swift's Letters*.

the adjacent country with some select friends, were amused with instructive conversation, and with *botanizing*, as it was called; the place affording an excellent opportunity for this study, in consequence of Dr. Delenius Professor of Botany having, at various times, scattered the seeds of some foreign, as well as many indigenous plants in the *environs* of this university. In short, Dr. Alcock, when giving out his lectures and instructions to his pupils, hath often made me consider him, as one of the sophists or philosophers of Greece—as a Socrates, a Plato, or rather as an Aristotle, most versed in natural philosophy, giving lessons to their attentive disciples, and teaching them the grand principles of human wisdom. Like the first of these philosophers, he never published any thing; either as not having leisure, or chusing rather to dictate to others, and leave them afterwards to make the publications.

About this time he was elected Fellow of the Royal Society. In the year 1748 he took his Doctor's Degree in Physic; and in 1754 was made Fellow of the College

College of Physicians in London. And now his fame, as a physician, as well as a philosopher, was become very great. Cases and consultations, by letters, he had in abundance : and his answers generally gave satisfaction ; and his prescriptions were followed with surprizing success. Thoroughly skilled in the anatomy of the human body, he was remarkably sagacious in discovering the seat and nature of the disorder : No wonder then that success was so often the consequence ; *as the knowledge of the disease is half the cure.* He had many pressing calls and invitations to come to London : And the Earl of Harcourt particularly and repeatedly advised, and even *solicited him* to shew himself in the metropolis, as the properest theatre for an ingenious man to appear upon ; and promised him all the recommendation and assistance in his power.

Indeed the Doctor always declared, he should chuse to spend a considerable part of his time in London, above all other places, if he thought that atmosphere would agree with his constitution. ‘ Here,’

D

says

says he, ‘ you can have recourse to all
 ‘ kinds of books,—here you have an op-
 ‘ portunity of facilitating the acquisition
 ‘ of knowledge by the best of company,
 ‘ by the most improving conversation, and
 ‘ a communication of sentiments with
 ‘ learned men. London, in short, is an
 ‘ epitome of all that is *valuable and agree-*
 ‘ *able*, as well as of all that is vicious and
 ‘ detestable.’ So the finest climates are
 most pestered with noxious and venomous
 creatures.

About this time, or some time before
 this, for I cannot ascertain the date, our
 Doctor was sent for by Lord Guildford to
 his seat at Wroxton, near Banbury, to attend
 his son, the present Right Honourable
 Lord North, Chancellor of the University
 of Oxford. It seems, Lord Guildford had
 lost his eldest son in a sort of squincy, or
 ulcerous sore throat, attended with an op-
 pression on the organs of respiration. His
 next son, at about the same time of life,
 died, as was supposed, of the same distem-
 per. The third son, our present able mi-
 nister, was likewise seized about the same
 6 age,

age, with nearly the same kind of symptoms. The fond father, having lost his two eldest sons in the manner described, gave this too for gone, and was overwhelmed with grief and despondency. The physicians of the neighbourhood had attended, and done their best, but in vain, for the recovery of the other sons. His Lordship now thought it prudent to seek for further advice; and immediately sent to Oxford for Dr. Alcock, praying him to make all possible haste to visit his son at Wroxton. The Doctor came, as soon as could be expected, saw the patient, prescribed for him, and, in conjunction with the physician of the family, by the blessing of God, recovered him.—*Huic ætati profuturum.*

The Doctor's fame, and practice, and labours still increasing, his health began to be somewhat on the decline. *A nervous, or subtle gouty humour, or a volatile, irregular, disseminated gouty matter,* as he otherwise used to call it, had, for some time, much disturbed him. He slept badly: and want of sleep discomposed him for the

next day's labours. Ever anxious for the pending state of his patients—anxious to improve and complete his lectures, and answer the high expectation of his learned auditors, (for acquired fame is a spur and encouragement, not only to preserve, but increase it). In consequence too, of unre-mitted study, and too intense application, and partly, perhaps, from constitution, being troubled sometimes with *hypochondriacism*, that *English malady*, and that constitutional malady, in all countries, to men of the brightest parts, and quickest sensibility *: being ever anxious, I say, on some, or all of these accounts, and nearly affected with any thing that touched his character, or disappointed his hopes, he found his growing business too much for him; and that, instead of giving him pleasure, it rather distressed and perplexed him. This first made him relinquish the ana-

* ΔΙΑ ΤΙ ΠΑΝΤΕΣ ΟΣΟΙ ΠΕΡΙΤΛΟΙ ΓΕΓΟΝΑΣΙΝ ΑΝΔΡΕΣ, Η ΚΑΤΑ ΦΙΛΟΣΟΦΙΑΝ Η ΠΟΛΙΤΙΚΗΝ, Η ΤΕΧΝΑΣ, ΦΑΙΝΟΝΤΑΙ ΜΕΛΑΝΧΟΛΙΚΟΙ ΟΥΤΕΣ; What is the reason, that all men, famous either in philosophy, in political science, or any of the fine arts, are subject to be melancholy, or hypochondriac?—*Aristotle*.

tomy to Dr. Smith. And this afterwards determined him to leave Oxford, and retire to Runcorn in Cheshire, his native parish; where he had purchased a pretty landed estate; and where he hoped, that country air, and exercise, with a few appropriate medicines (for he had not, as yet, tampered much with physic), and a remission of the mind from that constant stretch it was ever kept on in Oxford, might restore him to his former health and spirits, and enable him to renew the *Practice*, if he saw occasion, at least by letters and consultations.

Hannibal did not leave Italy with greater concern, than Dr. Alcock left Oxford. *Frendens, gemensque ac vix lachrymis temperans**; *murmuring, bemoaning, and scarce refraining from tears*. He often looked back on her lovely towers, and could not forbear throwing out a malediction on the *plaguy* † cause that drove him from her.

* The words of Hannibal on quitting Italy. Livy, lib. xxx.

† *Plaguy*. His own word; but rather an improper one, as implying a sort of curse, and too great an impatience under suffering.

‘ If I seem impatient, saith he, to leave
 ‘ this delightful place, it is from a princi-
 ‘ ple, that operates strongly, not only with
 ‘ all rational, but also with all animal
 ‘ creatures, a desire of relief from distress.
 ‘ There has for many years hung on the
 ‘ nervous system an intolerable oppression.
 ‘ Whether this be owing to some diffi-
 ‘ pated arthritic aura, irritating that sy-
 ‘ stem, or to some inscrutable peculiarity
 ‘ in the original constitution of those ad-
 ‘ mirably delicate organs that compose it,
 ‘ or to both together, which seems most
 ‘ probable, it is difficult to determine *.
 ‘ But whatever may be the cause, by hin-
 ‘ dering my sleep and repose, it has been
 ‘ the source of great misery and misfor-
 ‘ tune. And, notwithstanding the vigour
 ‘ of body and mind I formerly possessed,
 ‘ and all the efforts I have been able to
 ‘ use, hath so much sunk me below myself,

* In another letter he ascribes his disorder partly to
 a too intense application, and partly to some gentili-
 tious inscrutable cast of habit. ‘ The volatile subtle
 ‘ cause, says he, dodges about me, and rather eludes,
 ‘ than resists my attacks.’

and

‘ and so depressed me, that I have been
 ‘ rendered, in great measure, unable to
 ‘ follow the profession. Conscious of the
 ‘ successful pains I have taken in all the
 ‘ branches of physic, and of an ability to
 ‘ practice with far superior success to the
 ‘ common run of the faculty, it must be a
 ‘ great mortification to me not to be able
 ‘ to reap the genuine fruits of it for myself,
 ‘ friends, or the public. This makes me
 ‘ naturally desirous of trying what a change
 ‘ of air, of water, and way of life, may be
 ‘ able to effectuate. The bitter infusion
 ‘ of trifol. palust. tar-water, gummoſe
 ‘ pills, and tinctura ſacra vinoſa, as an al-
 ‘ terative, and not as a purgative, have al-
 ‘ ways been of ſome ſervice, but not ade-
 ‘ quate to the ſubtle latent cauſe. Bath
 ‘ water is likely to be of ſervice.’

He tried the Bath in February and
 March 1759, before he left Oxford, and
 ſaid, ‘ The waters here agreed very well ;
 ‘ and if I had had horſes, or the ſeaſon
 ‘ and ſituation would have admitted of
 ‘ walking, I believe I ſhould have found
 ‘ benefit.’

I had

‘ I had a consultation sent me here for
 ‘ Miss Talbot, drawn up by the Arch-
 ‘ bishop of Canterbury; and another by
 ‘ my Lord Harcourt, for his daughter. I
 ‘ could have carved my fortune long ago,
 ‘ but for the unaccountable complaint I
 ‘ have laboured under, which sinks me
 ‘ many degrees below myself, and at times
 ‘ renders me incapable of business. I am
 ‘ well assured, I might have had the Pro-
 ‘ fessorship of Physic, if I had applied for
 ‘ it. I have my Lord Harcourt’s letter to
 ‘ that purpose. But it would have re-
 ‘ quired residence to have discharged the
 ‘ incumbent duty consistently with the
 ‘ design of the institution, and my own
 ‘ doctrine. And therefore I declined all
 ‘ application for it.

‘ When I sleep well, I am in perfect
 ‘ health, vigour, and spirits, and rise su-
 ‘ perior to all business, and nothing is
 ‘ able to give me any trouble or difficulty,
 ‘ or stand in my way. But when it is
 ‘ otherwise, which is often the case, I am
 ‘ able to do nothing, but am a mere *caput*
 ‘ *mortuum*. If it were not for this single
 ‘ impe-

‘impediment, I could do what I pleased
 ‘with phyfic, and might carry it to any
 ‘length.’

Dr. Alcock had for some time been engaged to a very deserving young lady, of good family and fortune, Miss Cordelia Docton, of the parish of St. Budeaux, in Devonshire : and it had been agreed upon, that the nuptial ceremony should now be performed. But the Doctor’s uncertain state of health, and unsettled situation, being about to leave Oxford, and not being as yet accommodated with a proper house and furniture in the country, made it necessary to postpone the marriage to a more convenient season.

Procrastination in well-grounded love, as well as in other affairs of life, is generally imprudent, and often ends in loss, disappointment, and repentance. A few years after this, the parties met in Bath, and there were desirous of completing their intended union. But the clergyman, whom both requested by letter to come, and perform the ceremony, could not, without very great inconvenience, then

E

under-

undertake the journey. He thought, however, the good office would have been done by some other clergyman, and did not know they would wait until he could do it; otherwise, at all events, he would most certainly have attended. The marriage therefore, by consent, was again postponed for about six weeks longer; when, alas! in this short interval, the poor lady was unfortunately seized with an obstruction, and consequent mortification, of the bowels, and was snatched away from the hands of her cool lover, by the cold hand of death! But the most ardent lover could not be more sensibly affected at the most rapturous bliss being ravished from him, by the death of his fair one, than Dr. Alcock was on this sad occasion. The unexpected news threw him into the utmost anguish, and, for a time, rendered him incapable of business or conversation. He blamed himself—he lamented his ill fortune—crying out, he was infatuated that he had not consummated the nuptials sooner. *Modo animus,*

animus, modo occasio deorat * ; one while inclination, one while opportunity, was wanting.

To make but one account of this love affair, I have thrown in the latter part with the former, although it be a kind of anachronism in writing, to relate a distant transaction, before we be regularly come to it in the course of our biographical memoirs.

It was the latter end of June, or beginning of July, 1759, just before the Pomfret celebrity, when Dr. Alcock left Oxford, and retired to Runcorn. But even in this obscure corner † he could not be hid.

* *Modo animus, modo occasio deorat* ; the words of Hannibal at his not making himself master of Rome.
—*Livy*.

† Runcorn lies in the south-west part of Cheshire, at the conflux of the Mersey and the Weaver. The church is very ancient, was founded in 800, and was at first a collegiate church. A priory was, for some time, settled here, but afterwards removed two or three miles off to Norton, now the very handsome seat of the worthy Sir Richard Brooke, Baronet.

The Duke of Bridgewater's famous canal from Manchester to Runcorn, has made the place more

hid. His fame soon shone out; and his assistance was sought for by all the principal families, for a very large extent, in his own, and the neighbouring counties. His former health and spirits, in some degree, returned, on this change of situation and way of life: and, having only the practice of physic on his hands, he was able to prosecute it with vigour and alacrity, and would make very long and speedy journies, when the importance and exigency of the case required it. His rides extended once as far as Lincoln, frequently to Mr. Kynaston's; and even as far as Shrewsbury and Newport, in Shropshire; to several parts in Staffordshire; to Warrington, Manchester, and beyond Preston in Lancashire; through Chester to Denbeigh, Flintshire, Caernarvon, Merionethshire, &c. in Wales: Over a great

known of late. This canal, carried on and finished with extraordinary judgment and skill, both in hydraulics and mechanics, Dr. Alcock used to say, was one of the greatest and costliest works that was ever undertaken and compleated by a *private person*.

part

part of this wide domain did he range as a medical sovereign.

From so much business, in such a lucrative profession, money came in apace; which he constantly laid out in making purchases, in building houses, improving his lands, helping indigent relations, and other useful and charitable ways. For, according to Lord Bacon's maxim, he considered *money as muck, which must be spread, to be useful.* ' The care of my
' farms, saith he; the care of building and
' planting; the care of domestic affairs;
' and, above all, the extensive, anxious
' practice of physic, keep me so wholly
' employed, that I have scarce time or
' disposition to eat or sleep. I wish I had
' more of the latter. I think, the fur-
' ther we advance in life, the more frugal
' we grow of time *. Whether it be,
' that we employ it now more importantly,
' and, on that account, think it of more
' value; or because less is left behind:

* Sera in fundo parsimonia. Non enim tantum minimum in imo, sed pessimum remanet.—*Seneca*, Epist. I.

' but

‘ but so it is. When the glass of life is
 ‘ growing low, every grain of sand be-
 ‘ comes considerable to us. When it was
 ‘ full, we lavished it away, as if it were
 ‘ never to be run out.’

‘ *Optima quæque dies miseris mortalibus ævi,*

‘ *Prima fugit: subeunt morbi, tristisque senectus.**

VIRG.

Upon my seeming to hint, that I
 thought he overmuch engaged himself in
 these buildings, and other worldly † pro-
 jects and pursuits, he answered, ‘ Though
 ‘ few, perhaps, are naturally more turned
 ‘ to contemplation, and particularly on
 ‘ the shortness and vanity of human life,
 ‘ and all its shadowy empty schemes, than
 ‘ myself; yet we cannot wholly divest our-
 ‘ selves of these things; *nor, perhaps,*
 ‘ *ought we.* For, however chimerical and
 ‘ imaginary they may appear to the eye

* Virgilius una ponit morbos et senectutem. Et
 mehercule non immerito. Senectus enim insanabilis
 morbus est.—*Seneca.*

† Tu secanda marmora locas, sub ipsum funus, et
 immemor sepulchri domos struis!—*Seneca.*

' of reason, yet they seem to be inter-
 ' woven with the first principles of our
 ' nature, in some degree at least, and to
 ' make up the greatest part of what we
 ' here call happiness. Besides, they serve
 ' many other good purposes in life. They
 ' stir us up to action; make us look for-
 ' ward, and prevent stagnation in human
 ' affairs. Every man should endeavour to
 ' raise himself to a state of independency;
 ' for, as Dr. Swift says, riches are li-
 ' berty*.' However, to check all unrea-

* A proper attention to our own interest, while we
 keep clear of injustice and avarice, is natural and laud-
 able, as it is a security from the miseries of want, and
 prevents us from becoming a burden to our friends, or
 the public. And a man, that is, *suae fortunæ artifex*,
 that raises himself to fortune and consideration by
 honest industry, and a superiority of genius and merit,
 is a most valuable and respectable character; and the
 rank he obtains, is more honourable than that of the
 right honourable hereditary peer, who hath nothing
 but his ancestry to recommend him. When *Iphi-*
crates, the brave Athenian general, was reproached
 for the meanness of his birth by a noble, but profligate
 descendant of the great *Harmodius*, he replied; ' 'Tis
 ' true, my nobility begins with me, and yours will
 ' end in you.'

sonable

sonable fondness for these airy worldly schemes, he would often quote that excellent saying of the Psalmist, ‘ *When the breath of man goeth forth, he shall turn again to his earth; and then all his thoughts perish,*’ Psalm cxlvi.: All his worldly projects are over. And in another letter he concludes thus: ‘ Amidst all these engagements and pursuits, I look upon all sublunary things in the light which a wise man ought to view them, as only capable of affording us a comfortable accommodation in the way to our ultimate end; and sit detached from them, without any undue bias, permitting my mind to gravitate to its true centre of rest, the great Author and Governor of the universe; in a communication with whom, and a contemplation of his wonderful works and attributes in the system of nature, and the hope of a happy eternity in a future state of existence, consists the only rational enjoyment, even in this life.’

In the latter end of the year 1765, he had numerous patients in the *Influenza*.

This

This would not be worth mentioning, if it was not for his important observation on it. The same epidemic distemper had reigned in England about 22 years before. It is probably 'owing, 'he saith, to some sort of subtle effluvia 'in the atmosphere, originating either 'in this terrestrial globe, of which we are 'inhabitants, or propagated hither from 'some of the other planets. Electrical 'fire is unquestionably communicated 'from one part of the planetary system to 'another, and carries with it various species of minute particles of great efficacy. 'This position seems to be well illustrated 'by the strong phosphoreal smell, which 'is excited by the electrical effluvia after 'passing through certain bodies.'

It hath been commonly held, that no particle of our earth, however minute, could ever escape beyond our atmosphere, —that all matter, however divided, comminuted, volatized, or sublimed, still returns to earth again, and that she never admits of the least increase, or diminution of her substance.

F

But,

But, according to this doctrine it should seem, that some subtle matter may permeate through all the planetary regions, and that there is not only an atmosphere to every particular planet, but a general atmosphere to them all. This communication of a common matter to them all, demonstrates, I think, a similitude of form and substance in the several planets, that they are all stocked, as the earth is, with men, and creatures, and vegetables, suitable to their respective distances from the sun, their common centre. There is something very uncommon and grand in this notion, which shews a plurality of worlds to be far from being ideal. O how immense the power and wisdom of the Supreme Being! And what is man, when we consider, that

Worlds on worlds, hid deep in æther lie.*

POPE.

* The Doctor would often lament, that we were left so much in the dark as to these things; and that the inhabitants of the several planets had no possible means of communication one with another.

In

In the beginning of January 1775, Dr. Alcock had the misfortune to hurt himself much by a bruise from the pommel of the saddle. Being out on a journey, he could not reach home; but was forced to lie at the house of a most humane and worthy friend, John Blackburn of Orford, Esq; where he had every accommodation and assistance he could desire. A mortification of the contused part soon took place; and Mr. White, a very eminent surgeon of Manchester, who attended him, was apprehensive that a general mortification would soon ensue. But by the soundness of his constitution, and the blessing of God on the means pursued, he at last recovered. He ascribed his cure principally to large doses of the *bark* frequently repeated.

Notwithstanding Dr. Alcock's great run of business, and a seeming return of health and spirits, yet, *hæsit lateri letalis arundo*. His old nervous disorder, tho' allayed, was not removed. It still stuck to him, and at times greatly oppressed him. He very often slept badly,—complained of a diz-

ziness, giddiness, and stupor in his head. He said, he was sometimes so giddy, that he was afraid, people would think him in liquor, when they saw him walking in the streets. He put me in mind of Dean Swift's case, who was much troubled in the latter part of life with such a giddiness; and I was always apprehensive, that the Doctor's disorder, like the Dean's, would terminate in a depravation, or deprivation of the mental faculties, if he was not sooner taken off by some violent paralytic or apoplectic stroke.

There is a notion, that we receive at our birth the seeds of our death—that the inborn latent disease, as Mr. Pope saith,

*Grows with our growth, and strengthens with our
strength,*

at last gains the ascendancy, and by sap or storm demolishes the citadel. This notion seems to have been confirmed in the present case. The Doctor was from infancy subject to a nervous head-ach, which adhered to him through life, which disposed

posed him to be choleric and hypochondriac—which gradually impaired his strength, both of mind and body, and at last quite broke him down, and, coming with more impetuosity, flung him into a *comatose* sleep, out of which he could never be awaked.

Singula de nobis anni prædantur euntes :

Eripuere jocos, venerem, convivia, ludos.

HOR.

Years, as they pass along, first deprive us of one sense or capacity of enjoyment, and then of another. Sports, love, feasting, diversions, and entertainments, one after another, all lose their relish, and become insipid. This year perhaps takes away our hearing, the next our sight, another makes us lame, and another stupid: So that all our senses become benumbed, and *we outlive ourselves*; miserable monuments of human frailty! Such was the setting period of this bright luminary! The sharpest edge or point is easiest turned;

turned*; and the finest parts seem to be soonest liable to decay; the sooner, no doubt, for being hard exercised, and much worn, as in the present case.

The first remarkable effect that the Doctor perceived of his disorder, was, as he was riding on a visit in Wales; he felt all his right side to be unusually weak;—he could not keep his balance by his foot in the stirrup, and in a little time sunk off his horse on that side. However, he mounted again, and with some difficulty performed the journey. He continued after this about three years, growing weaker and weaker in body and mind, till an apoplectic or paralytic stroke put an end to his existence, on the 8th day of December, in the year of our Lord 1779, of his age the 73d.

He did not meddle much with Physic for a considerable time, hoping his strong constitution with great temperance, would get the better of the disorder; but at last

* *Cujus (Chryssippi) acumen nimis tenue facile retunditur.*—Seneca, De Benef. lib. i.

he took a great deal. In his letter to me of the 15th August 1777, he writes;—

‘ The disorder of my head hath of late
 ‘ been considerably aggravated. I have
 ‘ great oppression, and stupor, with giddiness,
 ‘ languor, and lowness of spirits.
 ‘ I have taken a variety of active medicines,
 ‘ without the desired effect. I have
 ‘ taken large doses of cortex Peruv.
 ‘ rad. valer. sal c. c. pil. gummos. pulv. e
 ‘ myrrh. comp. sal mortis, æther, garlick,
 ‘ buckbean, tar-water, flor. zinc, bathed
 ‘ in the sea, had a large scapular blister,
 ‘ &c. &c. I am determined once more to
 ‘ try the salutiferous springs of Bath.’

The latter end of February 1778, he, with great fatigue made the journey to Bath, but received no substantial benefit there. The Physicians of the place thought his disorder to be owing to the same cause to which he himself ascribed it. For the last year or two, when deprived of the power of riding and walking, he called it a *paralytic affection*. After the disorder was diffused through his body and limbs, it was remarkable, that he
 slept

slept well, nay, I thought, he rather slept too much.

Dying a bachelor, he left his fortune, which he supposes in his will, to be 15,000 *l.* equally between his two surviving brothers, Mr. M. Alcock, and the Reverend Mr. Thomas Alcock, M. A. Vicar of Runcorn; subject however to several considerable legacies, particularly to the daughters of a deceased younger brother; to whom also he had been very liberal in his life-time;—had rescued them from indigence and danger, and put them all in a decent way of living. Many others likewise of his friends had tasted of his bounty. On this occasion he observed;

‘ I have always thought, and still entertain the same sentiments, that a little assistance to one’s friends in our life-time, when we see the use and application of it, is much more benevolent and generous in the giver; and, where there is a right turn of mind, more satisfactory to him, as well as more acceptable and obliging to the receiver, than giving them much more at our death; when

‘ people

‘ people give away what is really no
 ‘ longer their own.’ However, he qua-
 lifies his generosity with this draw-back :
 ‘ but it is here as in the laws of gravity; the
 ‘ higher I raise them, the more they de-
 ‘ press me.’ I think the philosophy here
 better than the morality.

It hath been remarked, that no good
 Anatomist or Astronomer, was ever an
 Atheist. They see so many proofs of
 wonderful wisdom and contrivance in the
 human fabrick, as well as in the planetary
 system, as leave no room to doubt of the
 existence of an intelligent and all-power-
 ful Author. Dr. Alcock, thoroughly versed
 in both these sciences, drew the right in-
 ference, and always thought, and spoke
 of the Supreme Being with the utmost
 reverence.

In the preamble to the Will, these are his
 own words: ‘ I recommend my soul into
 ‘ the hands of God, the *Great and Stu-*
 ‘ *pendous Author of all the Great and Stu-*
 ‘ *pendous Works of Nature, hoping, through*
 ‘ *the merits of Christ, to obtain eternal hap-*
 ‘ *pinefs in a future state of existence.*’ And
 further on, he adds ; ‘ my worldly goods,
 G ‘ with

‘ with which *it hath pleased a wise and beneficent Providence, with a liberal hand, to bless and reward my honest endeavours and industry, I dispose of as follows.*’

A few days before I parted from him, which was but about a month before his death, talking to him on religious subjects, I mentioned this saying of Dr. Swift to Mr. Pope, Letter xxxvi. ‘ When I was of your age, I often thought on death : but now, after a dozen years more, it is never out of my mind, *and terrifies me less. I conclude, that Providence has ordered our fears to decrease with our years.*’ That is exactly my case, replied Doctor Alcock. The thought of death was once terrible to me ; but now it comes nearer and nearer to me ; it loses its dread, and appears natural and harmless.

He drew up parts, or sketches of several compositions on Physical and Philosophical subjects, but never published any. He said, the press swarmed too much with publications, and that many ingenious men lost reputation by commencing authors. However, he certainly meant to prepare

prepare some works for the press; but the engagements of a laborious practice, and at last, want of health, hindered him from putting the finishing hand to any thing. He had agreed with Mr. Jackson, printer in Oxford, in 1759, just before he left that place, to print a Treatise *on the Effects of Climate on the Constitutions and Manners of Men*. Of this a small part was then printed: but, on second thoughts, he stopped the further prosecution of the work, as not thinking it worthy of himself or the public in its present matter and form. The printed parts are still with Mr. Jackson, or disposed of *in vicum vendentem thus et odores*: and the Author could never find leisure to review and improve the work, and suit it to his own liking. He had also a pretty large tract on air; a sequel to the former. This I helped him to revise some years ago; and perhaps it may be fit to come before the public. A few weeks before his death, he told me, he had thoughts of publishing a choice collection of Formulæ, or approved Recipes for most of the disorders incident to the human body, with short

notes and cases, illustrating and confirming the efficacy of the medecines. To finish this, he said, would not require much time or pains, as the prescriptions were all collected together in a book, and wanted little more than to be fairly transcribed. If I find any thing that may be useful to the public, and no discredit to the Author, I shall most certainly bring it forth. But I have not as yet had an opportunity of examining his papers, and therefore shall say no more at present on this subject.

Doctor Alcock was of a strong athletic make, near six feet high,—had dark hair, a piercing eye, and pleasing countenance;—was very facetious and agreeable in company he liked, but rather too quick in discerning the failings and deformities of men, and somewhat severe and satyrical. The truly learned and ingenious he loved and admired; but for blockheads and pretenders, and *solemn triflers*, as he called them, he had the utmost contempt. He was very temperate and regular in his way of life, and so little solicitous about meat and drink, that he might justly say with
Solon;

Solon : ‘ Many people live to eat, but I ‘ eat only to live.’ He never sat long at meals : and after dinner, while other gentlemen were putting round the bottle, he would generally slip out into the gardens, or amuse himself with a walk in the fields.

He was very zealously attached to his present Majesty, and a great lover of his country, and its constitution ; but thought our politics had for some time rather deviated from the true principles of it ;—that the Dutch far exceeded us in the œconomy of government,—that from the extent of our dominions and services, our public accounts were become intricate, dilatory, and liable to frauds and abuse ;—that decayed rotten boroughs should be disfranchised, and a more equal representation take place ;—that, though our judges were men of great capacity and integrity, our law proceedings were prolix.—Juries were cramped in their powers by being made judges only of facts, and by being obliged often to give a special verdict, which, leaving the matter to the court, is no verdict at all, that a man must be a lawyer to be a good jurymen. He was particu-

larly displeased with voluminous writings, thought our long conveyances might be reduced to their ancient brevity and simplicity;—that a lease of years to give a man possession by deed, was an absurd remnant of the antient feudal tenure, and obtained not in wills;—that *fiction*s in the law, as they are called, made it look like jargon and chicanery;—that the statute laws were become so immensely numerous, that no lawyer could remember the names, much less the contents of them; and, in short, that the most necessary of all laws, was a law to reduce and reform the law.

He was a staunch friend to the Church of England, and esteemed it greatly superior to any other religious establishment, or christian society, he was acquainted with at home or abroad. When he came to church, which he lamented that business often hindered him from doing; he kneeled down and prayed, like a true suppliant before God: and I have heard him repeat the confession and responses, particularly the prayers in the office for the sacrament, with such earnestness and devotion, as shewed the heart was truly affected.

fectcd. However, he found fault with some of our articles; and, though he never troubled himself with controversial divinity; yet, when the doctrines of *Predestination and Reprobation*, and that the *best actions of the Gentiles were only a Splendida Peccata*, had the nature of sin in them—when these doctrines were advanced, either in preaching or conversation, his choler would immediately arise; he said, they were fanatical absurd doctrines, contrary to the first principles of natural and revealed religion, and to the wisdom, goodness, and mercy of God.

He had objections likewise against some parts of our Liturgy, thought it rather too long, that there were too many repetitions of the Lord's Prayer, and those for the King—That several services were now very improperly jumbled together,—and heartily wished, our learned and worthy Bishops, for many of whom he had great respect, in conjunction with convocation, would make some necessary amendments for the honour of our Church, and for opening a wider door of admission to all sensible nonconformists.

To

To hear an ingenious learned divine, a Newton*, or a Tottie, preach, he thought, one of the most rational entertainments. But the insipidity of some of our country curates gave him disgust. Indeed, he required more of them, than what from their education, station, and circumstances could reasonably be expected.

He never would consent to have a nephew of his bred a clergyman. ‘ A man
 ‘ takes his character from the figure he
 ‘ makes in his profession. Unless a young
 ‘ fellow hath great parts, and a prospect of
 ‘ obtaining good preferment, the mi-
 ‘ nistry rather sinks, than raises him.
 ‘ A young man of one, two, or three
 ‘ hundred a-year estate, is an estimable
 ‘ character in his neighbourhood and
 ‘ country. But let him be made, and
 ‘ continue a curate, and he loses confi-
 ‘ deration,—is no longer looked upon
 ‘ as the private respectable gentleman,

* Dr. Newton, founder of Hartford College, a very engaging and ingenious preacher. Dr. Tottie, Canon of Christ Church, another of Dr. Alcock’s favourite preachers.

‘ but as a mean unprovided low church-
 ‘ man.’

His farther sentiments as to this, and other public professions, are thus judiciously expressed in a letter, in answer to one of mine ; wherein I had hinted, that I thought physicians were generally too much attached *ad rem*, too intent upon their fees.

‘ Some particular professions are apt to
 ‘ give a cast to the character of the Pro-
 ‘ fessors. Industrious professions, such as
 ‘ Law and Physic, have a natural tendency
 ‘ to excite ambitious views, and too great
 ‘ an attachment to money for the attain-
 ‘ ment of them. In order to make any
 ‘ figure in these professions, a man must
 ‘ bend his whole efforts, and sacrifice all
 ‘ his pleasures and amusements to his bu-
 ‘ siness. Interest and money being the
 ‘ object of business, gradually gain the
 ‘ ascendant over all the passions and affec-
 ‘ tions ; and, unless we guard against their
 ‘ undue influence, are apt to seize the
 ‘ whole man. The profession of a soldier
 ‘ being just the reverse, produces opposite
 ‘ effects ; his leisure, and roving way of
 ‘ life,

' life, leaving him at liberty to gratify his
 ' inclinations. Pleasure and dissipation
 ' naturally become predominant, and
 ' stamp the character. Hence it is, that
 ' the law generally builds up, and makes
 ' great fortunes and families; and the
 ' soldiery too often depresses and sinks
 ' them. Sea officers have much less
 ' temptation and opportunity for pleasure
 ' and expence, and have oftentimes great
 ' prospects of interest, which gives a
 ' balance to their conduct, and puts them
 ' on a more saving plan, in order that they
 ' may one day quit the boisterous element,
 ' and sit down comfortably on land.

' The profession of a Clergyman, as it
 ' sets him up for a teacher and reformer,
 ' is apt to make him proud, dogmatical,
 ' self-sufficient, captious, and censorious;
 ' —sharp sighted in discerning the faults
 ' and failings of others, and too negligent
 ' of his own. And being restrained from
 ' expensive pleasures and excesses, and his
 ' circumstances being commonly narrow
 ' in the beginning of life, he is apt, with-
 ' out due care, to contract a habit of near-
 ' ness,

ness, and to be too much attached to his
' interest.'

These observations and reflections, with others already adduced, and I could bring many more, shew, that Dr. Alcock was not the mere Physician, but that his knowledge was various and extensive, that he was a good judge of men and things, and that few subjects came before him, wherein he did not give proofs of penetration and capacity.

He might say, *he was the first of his family* in Runcorn,—the first that brought it into any kind of public notice*. But his father's elder brother, John Alcock, Vicar of Iver in Bucks, declared he had a right to bear, and bore the arms of Bishop Al-

* Over Jesus College Gate, in Cambridge, is the device of a Globe and a Cock. The Globe, containing the Universe, or every thing, is the Emblem of *All*; which, with the Cock annexed, forms the name of the Founder. I know not, whether the Bishop's family was originally of Yorkshire or Cheshire. Sir Hugh Alcock, his father, had several sons, and lived in the beginning of his time at least at Cholmondeley in Cheshire.

cock †, three Cocks Heads, erased, fable, in a field argent, and said his family came from

† John Alcock, Doctor of Laws, born at Beverley in Yorkshire, brought up at Cambridge, was Dean of Saint Stephen's, Westminster, now the House of Commons, Master of the Rolls, afterwards Bishop of Rochester, then of Worcester, in the reign of Edward IV. On the translation of Dr. Morton to Canterbury, he was made Bishop of Ely, in the time of Henry VII. about the year 1495; by whom also he was appointed Lord High Chancellor of England. He founded Jesus College in Cambridge, anno 1497, and built a chapel on the south side of Beverley Church, where his parents were interred. The Bishop himself was buried in a chapel of his own erecting, at Ely, on the north side of the Presbytery, where there was formerly a very sumptuous tomb, now fallen to decay. He was much celebrated, both as a Preacher and Author. It is said of him; *Bonum et blandum sermonem prædicavit in ecclesia Beatæ Mariæ Cantabrig.* qui incepit in hora prima post meridiem, et duravit in horam tertiam, et ultra.

Playing upon names and words much prevailed in those days. Barclay, a poet of that time, as quoted by the ingenious Mr. Warton, thus sings the Bishop's praises.

——— A cock was in the fen ;

ELY.

I knew his voice among a thousand men.

He All was Cocke : he wakened us from sleep,

And while we slept, he did our foldes kepe.

The hungry wolves, which that time did abound,

What time he crowed, abashed at the sound.

When

from a distant branch of the Bishop's in Yorkshire, or Cheshire.

Doctor Alcock lieth interred in a leaden coffin, inclosed in an oaken one, on the north side of his own pew, in Runcorn Church, according to his own direction; and his executors are going to erect a monument to his memory, with the following, or nearly the following inscription.

Hic situs est Nath. Alcock, filius secundus D. Alcock, per uxorem bonam, Mariam Breck, Medicinæ Doctor in Academia Oxoniensi, et Lugdun. Batavor. Collegii medicorum Londini et Regiæ So-

When he went, faded the flow'r of all the fen!

I boldly swear, this Cocke trode never Hen.

See Mr. Warton on English Poets.

The Bishop would sometimes, even in his Episcopal character, pun or sport with his own name. I have seen in the Bodleian Library, an address or charge of his to his clergy, thus intitled; *Johannis Alcock, galli cantus ejus ad confratres suos curatos in synodo*; *John Alcock, his Cock crowing to his brethren the clergy assembled in synod*. To which Mr. Warton saith, is annexed his constitution for celebrating certain feasts. In the beginning is the figure of the Bishop preaching to his clergy, with two cocks on each side; and there is a cock on the first side.

cietatis

cietatis Socius, itemq. in priori Academia per multos annos in Chæmiâ et Anatomîâ celeberrimus Prælector, magnos ingenii dotes irremisso studio, et maximâ diligentîâ promovit, excoluit, adauxit. In Mathesi, in Philosophiâ Naturali, Astronomiâ, cæterisq. Sublimioribus Scientiis multum versatus est. Sed in medicinæ cognitione maxime præcelluit, utpote cui plurimum temporis et laboris impenderat. Valdè solers in dignoscendis morbis, non minus fælix erat in curandis. Nervosus, sive subtilis arthriticus Humor subinde eum vexabat, et processu temporis ab Oxonio in Runcornu, natale solum, secedere adegit. Sed in hoc obscuro angulo latere non potuit: Fama ejus cito effulgebat, et in suo, cæterisq. vicinis comitatibus, principales familiæ opem ejus salutiferam longè latèq. petebant. Tandem post multos labores, et cum morbo suo ingravescente quam diu confluctatus fuit, paralyfi sive apoplexiâ correptus, octavo die Decembris, anno 1779, ætatis 73, plenus annis et honoribus animam reddidit Deo optimo, maximo; cujus stupendam sapientiam et potentiam
in

in operibus naturæ nunquam satis admirari et laudare potuit.

Here lyeth interred Nathan Alcock, second son of D. Alcock, by his good and sensible wife, Mary Breck, Doctor of Physic in the Universities of Oxford and Leyden, Fellow of the College of Physicians in London, and of the Royal Society, and in the former University many years public Prælector in Chemistry and Anatomy. Strong natural parts he improved by great diligence, and the closest application. He was well versed in Mathematics, in Natural Philosophy, Astronomy, and other the learned Sciences; but he chiefly excelled in Medical Knowledge, as having made that more particularly his study. He was remarkably sagacious in discerning the nature and seat of diseases, and equally successful in curing them. A nervous, or subtle arthritic complaint obliged him to retire from Oxford, to his native parish, Runcorn. But even in this obscure corner, he could not be hid. His fame soon shone out, and his assistance was sought for by all the principal families

lies for a very large extent, in his own, and the neighbouring counties. His disorder gradually growing worse and worse, at last terminated in an apoplexy or palsy, which put an end to his life, on the 8th day of December 1779, in the 73d year of his age. Thus full of honours and full of years, he gave up his soul to God, the best and greatest Being; whose stupendous wisdom and power in the wonderful works of Nature, he could never enough admire and extol.



T H E E N D.

E R R A T A.

- Page 5. line 4. *for Wyrrol, read Wyrrol*
8. 16. *dele the two commas. — l. 19. for Woodward, read Woodford*
10. 6. *dele comma after Trinity — l. 8. dele comma after London — l. 18. after walls, for the comma put a colon.*
16. 13. *in the note, dele they — l. 15. dele not only*
21. 11. *after Knight, for the semicolon put a comma.*
28. 7. *after it, put a colon, instead of the period*
29. 19. *after tears, a comma only.*
36. 19. *for Denbeigh, read Denbigh — l. 20. after Wales, for the colon put a period.*
50. 9. *for Mr. Pope, read Lord Bolingbroke*



